

the Nation

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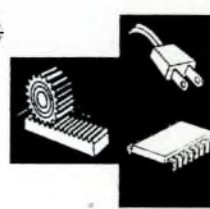
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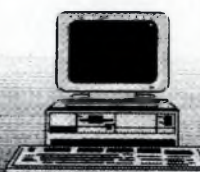
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WHO WAS ASLEEP AT THE SWITCH?

One must wonder at times if the vigilance of our leaders is sometimes relaxed in allowing the unthinkable to happen. Just because we can't imagine it happening.

What do I mean?

I mean that having a Hydro-Quebec representative on many of the boards of Cree organizations, such as the Eeyou, Opimiscow or Sakami Eeyou boards, is unthinkable.

When Hydro-Quebec compensates a municipality or farmers co-op are they on this non-native organization board. In one word NO!

This leads me to think that there is the possibility that we, as Crees, have exchanged being wards of the department of Indian Affairs to being wards of Hydro-Quebec. It is unreal that we allowed HQ to sit in and influence Cree decisions, making sure we spend the money "right." This is the reasoning HQ used to secure a position for itself on these boards.

It recalls the days when the attitude was that the Great White Father must make sure his incompetent red children were taken care of. It was my understanding that there would be no paternalism by the governments or the utility. Have our leaders allowed that hard-earned right to be negotiated away?

BY WILL NICHOLLS

By the Great Spirit, what unbelievable arrogance. What an intelligence-gathering move.

Just think of it: the GCCQ goes to the Eeyou board to get some money for a new court case. HQ is forewarned; the GCCQ needs money. HQ knows and can take advantage of that fact. On three boards they get a very good idea of our strengths, and more importantly, our weaknesses as a people.

They get an idea of how much money the communities are asking for each year and their needs. In short, they know more about the inner workings of the Crees than most Crees do.

This gives Hydro-Quebec an in to the innermost circles of power within the Cree economic and power structure. Not even Indian Affairs had this much.

It makes me think that the urban/rural myths (rumours) of some HQ employees drunkenly bragging at a party that they know everything that goes on in the Cree Nation may not be such a difficult myth to swallow.

After all, someone gave the fox the keys to the henhouse. I would like to know who and why. I'll even give you this editorial space to explain why having HQ on these boards is right and true to the Cree Nation as a whole.

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COVER PHOTO:
Wemindji street scene.
Photo by Neil Diamond

AUGUST 26, 1994



NO ONE CAN PREDICT ANYTHING

One night Philip [Awashish] and I recorded a long conversation with the three hunters. I asked how they felt when they heard that white men regarded the land on which they live as worthless and empty.

"They are saying," said Philip after a good deal of conversation, "that the white man's argument is bullshit. It may appear to white people there is nothing here. But if you will leave that land alone for a year or two, the animals will come back. That is why we are close to the land. We love the land because we know it will bring back animals, even if to white people it looks as though there is nothing there."

QUESTION: Can you ask Sam [Blacksmith] if he regards himself as the owner of the land?

SAM: I feel I cannot really say I own the land in the full sense of owning it. I am old, and I do not know how long I will live. After I am gone, I do not know who will follow. I cannot commit myself to say I own this land here.

QUESTION: If you do not own it, what is your relationship with it?

SAM: What I expect from the land is to be able to support myself as a trapper. I expect a lot from the land. And when I come down to discuss it, I always refer to it as my land, as long as I am depending on it.

RONNIE: It is quite ridiculous, this idea of the white man that a person can own all of the earth, and everything that's under it, and everything that moves on it.

SAM: We cannot know what will happen to man. That is the way things are while we are living. Even myself, today, I cannot know what will happen to me. If I was to fly back to Mississini, I could be gone for days, for a long while. I cannot say, "Well, I am going back because I have territory to look after."

For no one can tell what might happen to a man while he is in Mississini. One cannot predict life or death, so how can one say, "This is the way things will happen to me on my land," or, "This is what the land will be doing to me"?

QUESTION: Well, what are your basic thoughts about the land?

SAM: For one thing, a man who is trapping and hunting always hopes that things will continue to grow on the land.

QUESTION: If this is your trapping ground, do you own it?

SAM: We are told that we own or possess it, but really nobody can own it, he cannot do so. Nobody can, because eventually everyone dies. In this way, no one can really predict anything.

QUESTION: Is it the land you relate to, or the animals on the land? If the animals all left it, would you be interested in this land at all?

SAM: My relationship with the land depends on the animals. The animals support my family, they establish my pattern of life. If there were no animals here, I would not be here.

This excerpt is reprinted with permission from Boyce's 1991 book Strangers Devour the Land.

BY **BOYCE RICHARDSON**

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\$88,000 DONATED TO LIBERALS BY EXECS OF COMPANIES IN IMPACT STUDY

LIBERAL-LINKED FIRMS DID HYDRO'S GREAT WHALE IMPACT REPORT

BY DAN ROBINS

Hydro-Quebec's environmental impact report on the proposed Great Whale River Project was created largely by companies headed by Liberal Party donors, *The Nation* has learned.

Of the 34 companies that conducted studies for the report, 15 are run by Liberal donors, or nearly one-half. In total, these donors gave \$88,695 to the Quebec Liberals during the five-year period in which the studies were performed—1989-93.

The total rises to \$125,400 if you include donations by other people living at the same address as these presidents.

For comparison, the same companies' presidents gave only \$16,945 to the PQ in the last five years.

"That's not surprising," said Whapmagoostui Chief Matthew Mukash upon hearing of the Liberal donations. "It's sure these people were selected very carefully. There is a strong movement within the government to make sure the final word will be 'yes' to the construction of Great Whale."

Chief Mukash said the Liberal donations raise questions about the objectivity of Hydro's report. "Native people have to raise a lot of questions about the study and its validity," he said.

"In my opinion, science doesn't have the answers to all these questions."

Hydro-Quebec spokeswoman Marie-Pierre Bonassieux denied that politics had any influence on who was chosen to do the studies for Hydro. "We choose based simply on competence," she said. "There is no connection with the fact that the presidents of some of the companies might have some political links."

The report is a summary of 230 studies conducted for Hydro by Quebec-based companies and individuals. About a fifth of these were done by two subsidiaries of one company called the Cartier Group. The Cartier Group's chief executive officer, Serge Potté, gave the Liberals \$7,500 over the last five years. The chair of the Cartier Group is Paul Beauchemin, who gave the Liberals \$13,420 in the last five years.

Beauchemin is also president of another company, Beauchemin Beaton Lapointe, a subsidiary of the Cartier Group. This subsidiary performed 11 of the 230 studies that



PHOTO BY NEIL DIAMOND

make up Hydro's impact report. Another Cartier Group subsidiary, SOMER Ltd., took part in 37 of the impact studies.

In total, the impact studies cost Hydro \$400 million. Hydro gave the lucrative contracts for the impact studies only to companies it had already worked with before, instead of going to public tender. Susan Hilton, scientific coordinator of the Great Whale

Environmental Assessment Office, said this allowed Hydro to choose only those companies that could be expected to give the Great Whale Project a positive report.

The report must satisfy guidelines set by five federal and provincial committees in 1992. The report, which was made public in August 1993, is Hydro's 5,000-page summary of all 230 studies looking at the impact of Great Whale. Altogether, the studies are over 50,000 pages long. After public hearings this summer, the committees will decide whether the report meets their guidelines on Sept. 15.

Under Quebec law, only individuals—not corporations or unions—can donate to political parties. The maximum annual donation is \$3,000. The Director-General of Elections publishes donor lists for all parties each year.

Under Quebec law, only individuals—not corporations or unions—can donate to political parties. The maximum annual donation is \$3,000. The Director-General of Elections publishes donor lists for all parties each year.

WHO GAVE WHAT & WHEN

THE SNC-LAVALIN GROUP figures prominently in Hydro's 5,000-page Great Whale impact report. The SNC-Lavalin Group is Canada's largest engineering firm, and four of its subsidiaries did a total of 26 studies for the report.

Among them is the company Lalonde Girouard Letendre, whose president, Claude Comtois, gave \$13,800 to the Liberals. Jacques Bourbeau (who gave \$4,100) is the president of two other SNC-Lavalin subsidiaries—Shawinigan Lavalin, which did 18 of the studies, and SNC-Shawinigan, which did one.

The SNC-Lavalin Group has long been tight with Hydro and the Quebec Liberals. It manages about 85 per cent of Hydro's projects, and has gone into business with Hydro on a number of ventures. Together the two firms did an environmental impact study for China's massive Three Gorges Dam.

Along with the engineering firm Rousseau Sauve Warren, SNC-Lavalin and Hydro also received a contract in 1992 to construct a hydroelectric project in Iran. (Rousseau Sauve Warren itself did two studies for the present report, and president Roger Warren gave the Liberals \$15,000.)

The president of the SNC-Lavalin Group, Guy Saint-Pierre, is perhaps the most prominent Liberal of the bunch. He was Quebec's Minister of Education when Hydro-Quebec first started digging into James Bay in the early '70s. Two years ago he campaigned for the Charlottetown Accord and "renewed federalism." During the five years in question, Saint-Pierre gave \$10,750 to the Liberal Party of Quebec.

● THE DESSAU GROUP is a strange case. Two Dessau companies did studies for the report—Dessau Inc., which did 13, and Gauthier & Guillemette, which participated in 37.

Dessau president Jean-Pierre Sauriol gave \$8,825 to the Liberals—and \$2,000 to the PQ. Paul-Aime Sauriol, another Dessau executive, was also a generous donor. From 1989-1993, these two Sauriol households altogether gave \$26,675 to the Liberals and \$17,000 to the PQ.

● THE ONLY MAJOR PQ donor heading one of the companies was Paul Lambert of Groupe-Conseil LNR, who gave \$11,800. This company (now called Cima-Plus) did only one of the studies.

—Dan Robins

The Nation welcomes your letters, opinion pieces, poetry, photos, sports stories and scores, legends and news tips. We strive to reflect the views of all our readers.

Address racism, church told

Letter to the Editor:

I am writing regarding an article that appeared in the July 1 issue of *The Nation*, entitled "Though Many One Body," by the Rev. William Baldwin and Eliza Webb.

What troubled me about the piece was the way it ended. The last sentence of the article, which reads, "We should remember God accepts all races and religions," surely must be a misprint. This could easily be interpreted that the Creator, in his/her charity, accepts lesser mortals and faiths.

To my way of thinking and I'm sure to a great many of your other readers as well, for the article to be accurate it would need to read, "We should remember God is all races and religions."

I was pleased that you ran the article, because now that people in the Anglican Church are talking openly about the racism that exists in much of our white society, I look forward to hearing how they intend to address the problem.

From my own exposure to the Anglican Church, in the National Capital Region, little is being done on the local scene to address that issue. In fact, a great many Anglican priests I speak with clearly know little or nothing about the First Nations peoples of this country or their problems and are therefore not equipped to deal with the subject within their own parishes.

I hope that *The Nation* will be able to encourage the Anglicans to initiate an education program for their clergy in the National church, so that understanding, appreciation and respect for First Nations' values, culture, spirituality and traditions will become the rule, rather than the exception that it is now amongst Anglicans here in southern Canada.

I find *The Nation* both interesting and educational. Keep up the good work.

**John Goodfellow
Hull, Qc.**

Leave Crees out of it

Letter to the Editor:

The following letter was printed in the Montreal Gazette in response to an opinion piece by Henri L. Comte, a Montreal media consultant. Comte was criticizing the recent decision by a U.S. college to sell off its Hydro-Quebec bonds.

In his recent commentary, "College decision was misguided" (*Gazette*, Aug. 2), Mr. Comte points the finger at "students in American universities" who "seem more intent on polishing their lobbying and public-relations skills than finding out what the true economic situation is for the Cree, Inuit and Naskapi of northern Quebec," and he criticizes the recent decision by Williams College to divest its Hydro-Quebec bonds.

I am surprised and find it very interesting that Mr. Comte, while very critical of the American university students and their lobbying, fails to identify himself as president of Medianor Communications, a Montreal public relations firm.

True, he is entitled to his opinion, as long as that opinion is his own and he is not being paid to protect a client's interest. Otherwise, he should identify himself as a paid representative.

Likewise, the administration and the students of Williams College are entitled to do as they like with their investment. By questioning their judgement, Mr. Comte belittles that judgement and the reason(s) for their decision.

As for questioning their motive and asking "do they care if Cree unemployment is 50 or 75 per cent," my question to Mr. Comte is, does he? Not only does he belittle the American students, but he pretends to speak out of concern for the well-being of the Crees.

Most Quebecers, as well as a large segment of the New England and New York population, are aware of the Crees' opposition to HQ dams in northern Quebec. As part of that opposition, the Crees have approached several aca-

demie institutions, including Williams College, to divest their stake in HQ bonds. Several institutions, for whatever reasons they felt were justified, have already done so.

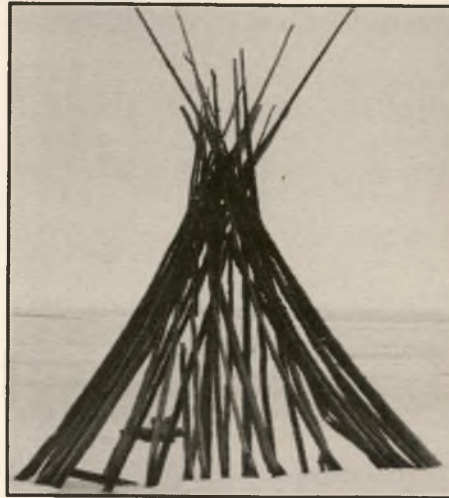
The Cree Nation has made several presentations to university students in the northeastern states, including Williams College. The purpose of these presentations is to explain the impacts hydroelectric development has on the Cree Nation. The Crees have first-hand knowledge of what those impacts are, and what economic benefits they bring

to their communities. For Mr. Comte to pretend that he has the best interest of the Crees at heart when critiquing the American students is misleading, if not hypocritical.

If Mr. Comte wants to defend "sovereignty," or if he wants to comment on or condemn action taken by American institutions against Hydro-Quebec or the

province of Quebec, we ask him to leave the Crees out of it. The Crees could and will defend themselves when they feel there is a threat. In this instance, we encourage and support the action taken by the administration and students at Williams College, no matter what the reason for the divestment.

**Luis Eguren
Coordinator,
Great Whale Opposition Campaign
Grand Council of the Crees
(of Quebec)**



NOTES

Due to lack of sleep, we printed the wrong area code for the phone number to get nomination forms for the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards in our last issue. The right phone number is 416-588-3328. We apologize for any inconvenience the mistake may have caused.

Also, keen-eyed readers may notice that we didn't print Neil's review of Wemindji's restaurants in this issue as promised. Look for it in the next issue.



PHOTO BY NEIL DIAMOND

WEMINDJI FIRST NATION MEETING HEATS UP

The Hughboy administration is under fire again.

It happened at an August 5 Band meeting about new proposed mini-hydrodams and other matters pertaining to the interests of Wemindji residents.

Walter Hughboy, the Chief, was proposing to create four or five more flow-of-the-river mini-dams. This would be in addition to the one existing mini-dam that has Wemindji residents enjoying free electricity.

At the moment, these proposed dams are still in the discussion stage, as far as the residents and Chief are concerned. Excess energy would be sold to Hydro-Quebec, which Chief Hughboy said would create "almost financial independence" for Wemindji.

Later in the Band meeting, the Chief shocked and outraged some residents when he hinted that Wemindji may consider pulling out of the Grand Council of the Crees/CRA. (See our interview with the Chief and an open letter from Wemindji dissidents on pages 18-20 of this issue.)

Chief Hughboy also slammed Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come for being "pre-occupied" with fighting the Great Whale River Project, saying it has cost Crees because other issues like jobs were neglected.

"One of the costs is sacrificing

our young people who are losing job opportunities," said Chief Hughboy. "People just don't have the resources to feed their families. It's like that not only here, but in all the other communities."

Grand Chief Coon Come, on vacation, wasn't available for comment.

In his interview with *The Nation*, Chief Hughboy says he doesn't so much want to break away, but maybe take away. He says Wemindji might consider taking back all the mandates the community has given the Grand Council/CRA.

Some Wemindji residents fear that this would be the break in Cree ranks that the Canadian and Quebec governments and Hydro-Quebec are looking for. Chief Hughboy admitted that there is strength in numbers, but only when all the numbers want the same thing.

Another thing that Chief Hughboy wants is an examination of Premier Robert Bourassa's self-government package, offered back in 1988. This would've given Crees a deal on policing, economic development, resource development and other issues, according to Chief Hughboy.

The demands by people to address what they felt were irregularities at the Wemindji Band Council went unheard as there wasn't enough time at the meeting. At the time of printing, no other meeting has been called.

BY WILL NICHOLLS

CREE GATHERING PLANS SET

The date and location of the Cree Nation Gathering are set—Sept. 13-16 in Old Nemaska Post.

"The setting is important," said Deputy Grand Chief Kenny Blacksmith. "It's getting away from your conventional conference structures. It will be something more traditional."

Chiefs and regional Cree leaders met in Nemaska in mid-August to plan the details of the Gathering. The Gathering will start just a day after the provincial election, which is expected to be won by the Parti Quebecois. Blacksmith said the Gathering is being held after the election so Crees will have a chance to weigh their future in a Quebec possibly led by a separatist government. "It will give us time to assess the results of the election and provide direction for the future," he said.

The threat of Quebec separation will also be a big topic of discussion at the Annual General Assembly of the Grand Council/CRA, scheduled for Aug. 23-25.

"Sovereignty is one of the most fundamental issues facing the Crees," said Blacksmith. He added that the Quebec election could set the course for the break-up of Canada. "We have an immense responsibility."

—Alex Roslin

COMPENSATION SOUGHT FOR RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Native children who were raped, beaten and sometimes tortured in residential schools should receive compensation, says Ovide Mercredi.

The recently re-elected National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations said Canada and the churches which ran the schools should assume responsibility for what happened in the schools and the social problems they created in First Nations communities.

"The impact of this policy of assimilation was the negation of our people," said Chief Mercredi, who also demanded a public inquiry and an apology. He did not specify an amount of compensation that the AFN would find acceptable.

Chief Mercredi made the call for compensation after the publication of a 200-page report called *Breaking the Silence*, which investigated conditions in the

BRIEFS CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

residential schools. The study found that native children were often beaten and sexually abused. Children were also given cruel and degrading punishments, including prolonged isolation sometimes without food and water. One girl recounted being sat in a chair and electrocuted until she bled.

Hundreds of thousands of native children, including hundreds from James Bay Cree, were forcibly sent to the schools, which started operating in the 1800s and continued until the early 1970s. The school year usually lasted 10 months, and children were not allowed to speak their own languages. They often lost their mother tongues and were no longer exposed to the traditional ways of life of their ancestors.

The Catholic Church, which ran half of the residential schools across the country, has already refused to compensate all native people who were in the schools.

Monseigneur James Weisgerber, of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Churches, told Canadian Press that his

church has already apologized.

He said the church is ready to compensate only those who could prove they were abused.

"But we don't have any intention of paying compensation for the unique reason of having been in a residential school," he added.

—Nation staff

LAWMAKERS OKAY PEYOTE USE

Native Americans are on their way to being able to legally use and carry peyote for ceremonial purposes.

A bill protecting the religious use of peyote has passed the House of Representatives. Similar legislation is also before the U.S. Senate. Twenty eight states already permit the use of peyote by native people, but without federal approval it remains in legal limbo.

Peyote is a small, spineless cactus that grows in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas and in northern Mexico, and has been used by First Nations people for sacramental purposes for at least 10,000 years.

—Nation staff

NATIVES ARRESTED AT BLOCKADE

Five natives were arrested on Aug. 8 north of North Bay, Ont. for blocking a highway used by logging trucks and local residents.

"This is an illegal arrest," said Sherwood Becker, a member of the Temagami Nation and one of the protestors. "It's our land."

The protestors were charged with mischief and intimidation. The blockade was put up Sunday night on Highway 805 about 75 km northwest of North Bay. The arrests took place Monday, and a justice of the peace released the protestors on condition that they don't put up any more blockades in the area. They appear in court Sept. 8.

The protestors were trying to stop logging trucks from reaching forested areas in the municipalities of McWilliams and McBeth, according to an article in *La Presse*. These forests are the subject of bitter dispute between the Temagami Nation and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. The logging is taking place on ancestral lands of the Temagami People, who do not recog-

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Coming on CBC TV Maamuitaa This Week

August 27/28

Chewehtaa Waswanipi

We present you Part 2 of 2 parts on the people of Waswanipi. The second part shows you some of the activities they held when they went back for the fourth time this summer.

Guests: Louise B. Saganash, Allan Saganash Sr., Diane Gull, Diane Cooper, Noah Eagle, Annie Eagle
Length: 24'50

Sept. 3/4

True North Concert

In the spring of 1992 the True North Concert was held in Whapmagoostui. Entertainers are talented singers, fiddle players, dancers from Northern Quebec.

Guests: Kenny Mianscum, Cyrille Fontaine, Matthew Mukash, Andrew Natachequan, Inukshuk dancers
Length: 27'50

nize provincial jurisdiction over this territory.

—Nation staff

IRWIN COUGHS UP CASH

Ottawa will spend \$11.4 million to clean up Pukatawagan's sewage-contaminated water. Indian Affairs Minister Ron Irwin made the announcement after visiting the community 200 km north of The Pas, Manitoba.

Irwin's visit followed a mass exodus of Pukatawagan residents prompted by a flurry of Hepatitis A cases caused by dirty water. "We took a tour of all the sites and it's pretty bad," said Irwin. "To see raw sewage going into a river that people drink from is terrible."

Irwin's remarks mark a change in the government's tune. When Pukatawagan residents first fled their community in early July, Ottawa said the problem was being exaggerated.

—Nation staff

SUICIDE WAVE HITS NATIVE TOWN

A spate of suicides has hit a north-western Ontario native community, prompting exasperation from the Chief over the community's poor housing, lack of land and inadequate funds for a healing centre.

Pikangikum Chief Gordon Peters accused Canada, Ontario and the Assembly of First Nations of abandoning his community.

Most of Pikangikum's 1,600 residents and members of six nearby First Nations spent Aug. 9 at the funeral of Anthony Hill, 29. Hill, a father of two young children, hung himself in his bedroom closet the Thursday before, the latest in a numbing list of suicides. There have been five so far this year and more than 50 attempts. Gasoline sniffing and alcohol abuse are also rampant.

Shortly after Hill's death, a 13-year-old girl ran into the dense bush surrounding the village, about 300 km northeast of Winnipeg, and threatened to kill herself with a knife. Days later, a 21-year-old man was found unconscious in a police cell after trying to strangle himself with his T-shirt.

Federal Indian Affairs Ron Irwin said Pikangikum is not as badly off as other native communities. It has a new hockey arena and other services some reserves don't have, he said in a Canadian Press report. "I've seen far worse in many First

Nations."

Fourteen new houses are also being built, he said, although a backlog remains. "I don't think throwing more money at the problem is the solution."

The day after the funeral, on Aug. 10, the Pikangikum Band Council boarded up the local police detachment and threatened to kick officers out of the community. Chief Peters told Canadian Press that he and other band councillors were forced to spend most of the early morning hours the previous day searching for a group of 10 suicidal and violent teenagers.

The four police officers stationed in the community were nowhere to be found, he said. "The band councillors and I aren't trained to deal with this kind of thing," said Chief Peters.

The teenagers, who were high on gas fumes, fled into the bush and were threatening to kill a security guard.

A provincial police spokesman in nearby Kenora said the officers were already looking for the youths when Chief Peters tried to contact them.

—Nation staff

SANDY LAKE REJECTS MINING

For the second time in a month, the Sandy Lake First Nation in northern Ontario has turned down a request from the Ontario government to discuss mining development on its traditional land.

Sandy Lake told the Ontario Natural

Resources Ministry it opposes a gold exploration project proposed by JVX Ltd., a company based near Toronto.

I was told by our people not to meet with them," said Sandy Lake Chief Eli Sawanas in an article in *Wawatay News*. "There's no point meeting with them. We talked about the same things several years ago and they're not telling us anything significantly new."

Some of the drilling is supposed to take place during winter months on the ice of Sandy Lake's West Arm Bay. Chief Sawanas expressed concern about the effect this could have on the community's drinking water and nearby fishing activity.

"The response is always the same," said the Chief. "Our people don't want mining development or exploration."

The Sandy Lake people no longer go out to trap and hunt on the land for months at a time, but Chief Sawanas said all of the community's traditional land is still being used during certain parts of the year. The Band Council is creating various programs to encourage Sandy Lake families to spend more time in the bush. One program offers assistance to families that want to repair their hunting cabins or build new ones. Work on about a dozen such cabins is currently underway.

Said Chief Sawanas, "We would like to continue that so people will continue to use the land we're talking about."

—Nation staff



PHOTO BY NEIL DIAMOND

TO VOTE OR NOT TO VOTE

By the time enumeration period arrived a few days ago, the Quebec Director-General of Elections had recruited more than 20 Eeyouch enumerators to walk into our homes in order to register the population for the Sept. 12 provincial elections.

An honourable mission, one might say, but yes, there is also a disturbing side to this rather determined courtship—this time more than any other.

by D. Romeo Saganash



So, as I observed the phenomenon, I couldn't help but wonder how we sometimes so cruelly lack consistency in politics. If we are indeed a distinct nation, a people (Eeyou), then why are we participating with such hopeless submissiveness in another nation's electoral process?

Yet, as statistics have shown, a constant one-quarter of the Cree voting population do effectively exercise a privilege they only obtained some 25 years ago (1969), which is to say the least a mystifying thing for me. How does one grasp the nature of this defying act (I'm exaggerating)? And what significance should we lend to this phenomenon?

Non-participation of Indigenous Peoples in federal or provincial elections has become, over the years, an understood and widely accepted principle. There is a political motive behind the position; that of being distinct nations, searching for a recognition of our own government. I can of course, as a fairly liberal person, truly respect those 26 per cent among the Cree Nation who chose to participate in the 1989 provincial elections, as well as the 24 per cent who voted in the referendum on the Charlottetown Accord. But allow me to remain bewildered.

Whether it's 26, 24 or 99 per cent, governments we all know too well by now have an unscrupulous tendency to remain oh! how inattentive and unheeding toward Indigenous Peoples anyway. That is why I think there's something pathetically pathetic about all this.

Of course, a political oversight of this kind

could only benefit those who still hold colonialist, racist, 19th-century views about Indigenous Peoples and what we are. On the one hand, Lucien Bouchard is absolutely convinced that we aren't "peoples," and on the other, a new self-appointed patriot by the name of Richard Le Hir isn't so sure we are "civilizations."

Racism, whether direct and ugly such as Le Hir's or subtle such as Bouchard's, is still racism to me. And incidentally enough, these same individuals and their fellow separatists are likely to be, after Hydro-Quebec, our next most ferocious opponents.

As we enter, Cree and Quebecois, perhaps the most crucial moments of our respective histories, questions of participation and non-participation become fundamental for our own people, as the name of the game here is: the majority rules. We are in fact in a context where every move and action will be politically monitored and interpreted by our opponents. This alone should compel any Cree to think twice before voting on September 12. And one should at least attempt to understand that for a Nation like ours, participating in the upcoming provincial elections is exactly what it is: somewhat too "provincial" of an attitude.

And then again, the phenomenon is perhaps more deeply rooted than we think, and maybe the 25 per cent rate of participation will persist this time around, despite all. In that case, should we take comfort in the fact that the colonizer and the colonized are old acquaintances after all?

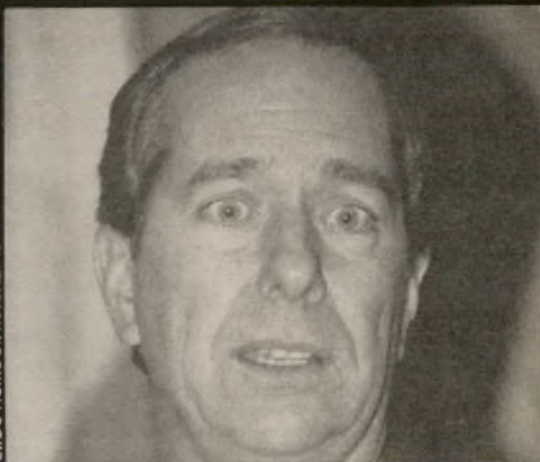
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BROUILLARD GAVE PQ \$400

Richard Brouillard, one of the top consultants working for the Cree economic entities, made a financial contribution to the Parti Quebecois in 1992, *The Nation* has learned.

Brouillard, who lives in Val d'Or, gave \$400 to the party's Abitibi-East riding association, according to public records of political donations. Brouillard is the controller of the Board of Compensation and a consultant to Servinor Food Wholesalers Ltd., a subsidiary of CreeCo.

Brouillard said he made the donation at around the time of the defeat of the Charlottetown and Meech Lake accords, when nationalist sentiment was especially high in Quebec. "Right now, I'm much more lukewarm [toward sovereignty]," he told *The Nation*.

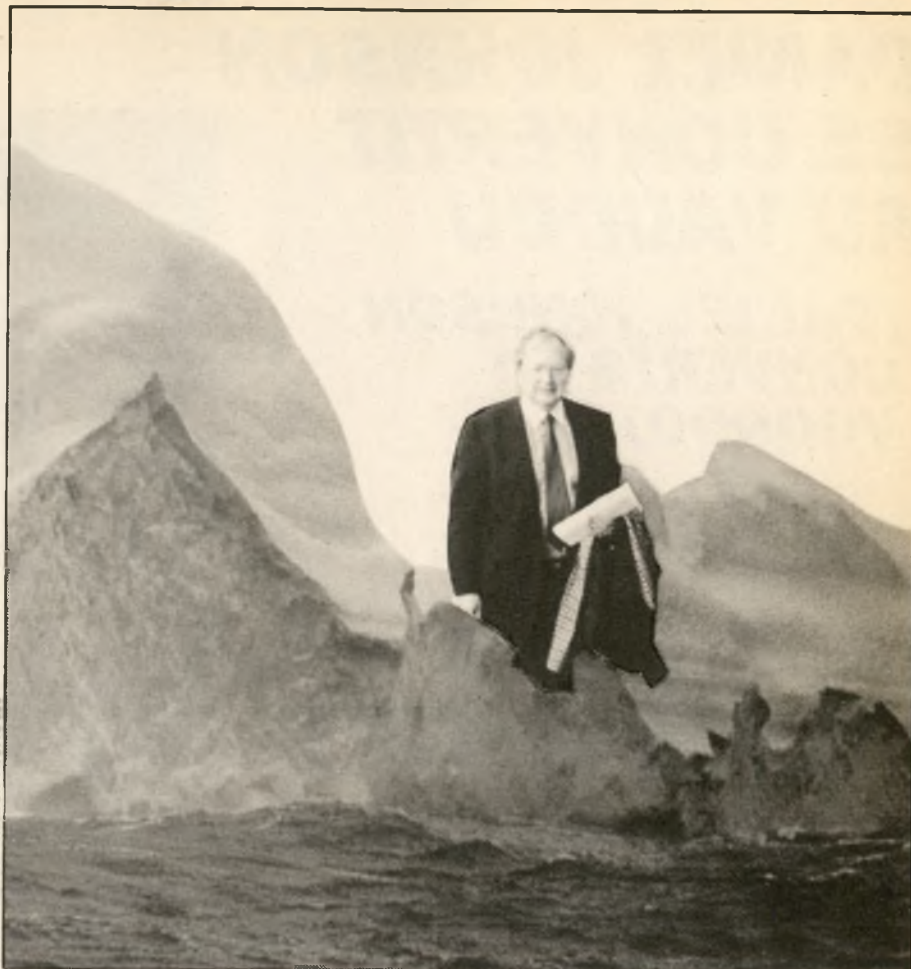
Asked if he supports Quebec's independence, Brouillard said, "When I was a student I used to support sovereignty. Now that I'm in business, it depends on the day. Sometimes I think it is the solution to a lot of problems. Sometimes, I'm not so sure."

Brouillard added that in the late 1980s, he also donated \$200 to the Liberal Party of Quebec by purchasing two seats at a fundraising supper for the local MNA. But unlike the donation to the PQ, which he made due to his own personal convictions, Brouillard said the donation to the Liberals was requested by a Cree entity.

"It was a form of thank-you to the local MNA," he said. "The Crees wanted to be seen as participating in political life. It's one of those things that out of context looks awful. In context, I think it was okay. It's one of those niceties that I guess has to be done once in a while."

—Alex Roslin

GRAPHIC BY WILLIAM NICHOLLS



LA PRESSE TELLS OFF RICHARD LE HIR

Richard Le Hir is in the news once again. In the Aug. 13 issue of *La Presse*, the newspaper's chief editorialist, Alain Dubuc, wrote a scathing editorial making fun of the PQ star candidate, and calling him "intellectually undisciplined."

Dubuc was commenting on recent revelations that Le Hir was once a consultant to the Canada 125th birthday campaign even though he now claims to be a separatist.

"It is quite difficult, like Mr. Le Hir attempts to do, to reject federalism while at the same time celebrating federalism," wrote Dubuc.

Dubuc was especially amused that Le Hir, "without laughing," said that while he worked for the Canada 125 organization, he never saw the \$50-million celebration of the nation's birthday as "the promotion of national unity."

"We don't know if Mr. Le Hir takes us

for imbeciles or if he is one himself," responded Dubuc.

Dubuc is not the first to tell off Le Hir in recent weeks. Le Hir, the former president of the Quebec Manufacturers' Association who is touted as a possible Industry Minister in an independent Quebec, was also rebuked by Premier Daniel Johnson and Cree leaders for making disparaging remarks about native cultures and civilizations.

Le Hir made the anti-native remarks in a new film about the Great Whale Project called *Power Of The North*. "I would have something to learn from them [natives] if it could be shown that their culture demonstrated its superiority in one form or another," he said.

"[But] when you look at what heritage has been left by native civilizations—if you could call them civilizations—there is very little."—Nation staff

MOST NATIVES UNLIKELY TO VOTE

Ho hum. That about sums up the attitude of many of the First Peoples living within Quebec's current borders toward the provincial election.

"The elections? Which elections? It's been a long time since the elections were held [for Band Council]," was how Kahnawake Band Council member Billy Two Rivers put it when asked by *La Presse* to comment on the election.

As for the provincial election, which is scheduled for Sept. 12, the Mohawks of Kahnawake and Kanehsatake aren't even letting scrutineers in to make voters' lists or set up voting booths. Of a population of 12,000 Mohawks in Quebec, not one voted in the 1992 referendum, none voted in the 1989 Quebec election, three voted in 1985, 10 in 1981 and seven in 1976. Mohawks also usually don't vote in federal elections either.

"We are a nation. We have been sovereign here for centuries, and never have we been asked to become Canadians," *Eastern Door* editor Kenneth Deer told *La Presse*. "Voting in these elections for us would be like denying our identity, and the Mohawks have always been very firm on that."

Deputy Grand Chief Kenny Blacksmith told *The Nation* he "sympathizes" with the Mohawk position, but added that the Crees have a vital strategic role to play if Quebec threatens to pull out of Canada. "I understand why they [the Mohawks] act in the manner they have chosen, but at the same time Crees will have a very major impact. The position of the Crees could be very important in the whole situation," he said.

"We're all concerned about what the outcome will be. As for our people, we've never dictated what they should do or if they should vote. We will provide information at the Annual General Assembly about the possibilities. But I think the people will decide."

Quebec's National Assembly took away natives' right to vote in 1915. It was only given back 25 years ago. Only 29 per cent of natives cast a ballot in the last Quebec election in 1989.

Crees boast an even lower rate—only 26 per cent. The only nations voting less were the Algonquins (19 per cent), the Mi'gmaq (17 per cent) and of course the Mohawks.

—Alex Roslin



TOP 10 REASONS FOR NOT VOTING IN THE PROVINCIAL ELECTION



Mohawk Territory provincial polling booth.

10. Mohawks will beat you up if you do.
9. Both parties are into the wet dream of Great Whale and NBR.
8. Romeo Saganash isn't running for either party.
7. Two words: Le Hir.
6. You're waiting for Billy and Walter's Cree Beaver Party to run.
5. The two main leaders look too much like a used car salesman and a used shoe salesman.
4. Tonya Harding's goons have been spotted wielding lead pipes outside your polling station.
3. The last political leader you trusted, Rene Levesque, is dead.
2. Two more words: Le Hir.
1. Don't have time to follow election due to excitement over Michael and Lisa-Marie Jackson's new baby.

—Neil Diamond

Leaving home

The summer season was coming to a close. I felt it in the coolness of the evenings and saw it in the light mist that hung over the bay as dawn crept over the forest which surrounded the village.



by Dorothy MacLeod Nicholls

Our long hours of daylight were shorter and fewer children came to swim by the inlet of the bay. They had started to swim two days after the ice disappeared from the lake and I missed their laughter and young voices shouting as they splash about in view of my front window. The quietness brought back memories of leaving home to return to school each year.

I recalled how we stood on the platform of the station waiting for the train. It was a cold unfriendly place and as often as we left from this train station, we never saw the town. Our time of departure was well into the evening and precious last moments were preserved for family. The last few days were spent shopping for new clothes, visiting old friends of my parents and being together in the hotel rooms. Now, on the station platform, we moved closer together listening to the signal of the approaching train as it gasped and grinded its wheels to a stop in front of us.

This was the part of the journey which reached its highest peak of emotion for all of us and it remained the most vivid in my mind. We struggled to control our emotional state but it never worked. The thought of leaving for 10 long months seemed like eternity at this point. I had been going south to school since I was five and if I thought it would come easier with time, it never did. In fact, I envied the younger ones who didn't know how long and lonely it could be...

On board the train, we rushed to the windows to catch a last glimpse of our parents as they stood waving to us. We tightened our arms around the small ones who cuddled in for security. Clutched in their small hands were paper bags containing a few familiar items from home—bannock, blueberries and slippers made from smoked hide. Soon everyone was asleep but me. I watched the passing lights flicker through the darkness of the window, and taking a deep breath, I drew in the familiar smells of home that came

from the bags the children carried. Loneliness hit the pit of my stomach and I fought back the tears that threatened to overflow.

Closing my eyes, I visualized the house; my mother moving about in the kitchen; my father sitting at the kitchen table; the baby in the hammock; the roar of a freshly lit fire makes and the smell of coffee perking; the low murmur of my father's voice; the clear sweet song of the birds; the lapping of the water by the shoreline outside of my bedroom window; the rhythm of a paddle gently dipping and sliding into the water as my grandfather went to his fish nets early in the morning; the crackling and smell of firewood from my grandparents' small wood stove in their small one-room cabin; the barking of the dogs; from one lone bark to a volume of barks and back to one lone bark; and the deep harmonious sounds of frogs singing in the creek as dusk fell around the village.

I'd see within my mind the sharp outline of the church sitting on the ridge across the bay. Dotted along the banks were white canvas tents and overturned canoes along the shoreline; the green grass surrounding our home; the dock and the inviting blue waters closing in around me as I dove in. Mercifully, the rhythm of the wheels and the swaying of the train would lull me to sleep.

In the early morning our train pulled into the city and we were overwhelmed with the busyness of everything around us. Holding tightly to the hands of our bewildered siblings, we were caught up with baggage, porters and streams of people moving to and fro along the long platform and the enormous station. The cab ride to our residences was a tour of narrow streets, stone buildings, exclusive shops and steep hills.

Our arrival at residence was a flurry of activities. Greeting old friends, meeting new ones, claiming a bed, a dresser and closet room took up our time and thoughts. With the night came memories of home. The ache in my chest cried out for release and as I laid in the darkness of the room, I let

Home...

the tears flow. The responsibility of the younger ones was gone and I could hide from the peering eyes of my roommates who were, no doubt, doing the same.

I knew, as time became filled with studies, friends and schedules, that I would overcome the loneliness and start marking the days as one does waiting for a happy event.

My sister and I saw the boys on Sunday afternoons. Together we roamed the Plains of Abraham, counting and climbing steps up the steep cliffs and exploring along the paths through the bushes. It reminded us of home and it took away the sounds of a busy city. The museum bore evidence of our existence as we signed the register every Sunday.

We became closer, being careful not to hurt each other's feelings and our parents would have marvelled on how well we got along. We missed the comforting embraces of our mother and the reassuring hand of our father. It made us independent, growing up faster than our peers and robbing us of a normal childhood.

I resented the time it took away from

sharing with my mother and the bonding that was formed between mothers and daughters. Our conversations were restricted, as in many cases, we both had to be there to understand the importance of that time. She seemed to stay naive and untouched... And there was a time when I felt I had surpassed her, knowing more than she did.

Our one contact from home was my father's yearly trip to Montreal. His stopover for a few days always was a happy time as we overflowed in his hotel room and attracted humorous attention in the elegant dining room. Much too soon, he was gone, and we comforted each other with the knowledge we were less than six months away from home.

The effects of those school periods haunted me through many of my adult years. I came home in the summer with my family, felt the familiar excitement of seeing all of us together again. I still wept each time I left, never having enough time to make up for those lost years. A great part of me yearned to stay behind; to satisfy my hunger for parental love and affection. The cry of the little girl who left home at five years old still dwelt within me. The cold,

dark, bleak station represented the loneliness we endured away from home.

I live close to where I spent the summers. The bay is still there, but I can no longer hear the familiar sounds. They are replaced by construction, vehicles, motored boats, television and radio. The village has been caught up in a faster-moving world and nobody has time to smell the flowers.

Blueberry season is here. Children have started school in the community and I am on my way to the city to return to school. I don't know if the train still travels that route because we can fly by plane now and reach our destiny in less time than an overnight trip on the train.

Still, as my time of departure approaches, I feel the flutters in my stomach and I want the summer days to never end.

When I board the plane with my five-year-old granddaughter, I wonder if someone will give her a paper bag of familiar things from home. Will I draw a deep breath and close my eyes to remember sweet memories of home... The smell of blueberries, bannock and smoked hide.

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AIR CREEBEC FLYING INTO THE BLACK INK

Things are starting to look up at Air Creebec. More natives have been hired. The management team has been restructured and perhaps most importantly, the Cree Nation's airline company is making a profit for the first time in four and a half years.



PHOTO BY NEIL DIAMOND

by Catherine Bainbridge

"AIR CREEBEC HAS been on the hot seat for quite a long time, and it deserved to be," said the airline's president, Albert Diamond, in an interview with *The Nation*.

"But now things are starting to turn around. Everyone is pulling together to make this airline work."

As of the end of June this year, Air Creebec was \$220,000 in the black, said Diamond. Also for the first time since its creation, the airline made money during the winter months.

"Every year, it lost money during January, February and March because of the access roads which are open at that time. But this year, we showed a profit in March."

The airline, whose fiscal year runs from January to December, was expected to only cover its operating losses up until the end of August and start making money only in September. This year, the losses were cov-

ered by June.

"All we need is until the end of 1995 and then I see no reason why Air Creebec won't be making \$2-3 million net profit a year," said Diamond. "We looked at the figures and couldn't believe it, but it's true."

The beginnings of this turnaround can be credited to several major changes at the company within the last year and a half, said Diamond. The changes include cutting of employees, gaining new contracts, restructuring the management team and involving the Board of Compensation in decision-making on a much more regular basis.

"We started downsizing in June 1993. A lot of people had to be laid off, and it was a hard time for people, because employees were all looking over their back and wondering who was next," said Diamond.

"And at that time, it was losing money

every year, so people were very discouraged and nobody wanted anything to do with Air Creebec."

Diamond said restructuring the management team was another of the major changes. Two years ago, the management style was somewhat authoritarian, secretive and disorganized, said Diamond. "The VP at the time ran the company like a one-man show. The management was not disclosing the full financial picture to the Board of Compensation and the Board was not meeting enough, so Air Creebec was kind of left a bit too much on its own."

Diamond says he now works by full disclosure to the Board. "We have to tell the Board everything. Not just the good stuff."

For the Cree Nation, perhaps one of the most important changes is the rising level of Cree employment at the airline.

Since 1992, native employment at Air

Creebec has risen from 16 to 27 per cent, according to Human Resources manager Josée Falvo. Crees are working in all areas of the airline's business. From new pilots Danny Pash, Ernie Sutherland, Terry McLeod and Richard Lebizay to stewardess Marina Shisheesh and 42 other natives working in everything from ticketing to airplane maintenance and accounting.

Native employment has become a priority. But this is only a recent development, added Josée Falvo.

"Everyone was so busy trying to be on budget, it [native employment] didn't seem so important before. We were on the hot seat and trying to get off. No one had time. And it wasn't a priority."

While the employment picture for Crees is improving, the ratio is still 141 non-natives to 47 natives. That won't be changing overnight.

"One of the basic problems is re-location," Falvo said. "Crees generally don't want to move to Val d'Or away from their families. It's lonely, they have to make new friends and it's very hard on families."

Another big reason is the salary levels at Air Creebec are somewhat paltry compared to the Cree civil service.

Salaries at Air Creebec have been frozen for the past three years. Also, while \$27-30,000 is reasonable for the airline business, it's not very tempting when Crees can make \$40,000 working for a Cree entity in the communities.

In the long run, more Crees could be working for Air Creebec if it moves more of its operations on to Cree land, said Alfred Loon, who is in charge of Administration and Co-ordination for CreeCo.

"It is the wish of the Cree people that Cree businesses be re-located as much as possible to the communities," said Loon. "So we are now doing a study to determine to what extent it is possible to totally or partially re-locate the different CreeCo. businesses."

Loon said such a move will be a boost to Cree employment because non-natives currently working for different Cree companies won't pack up and move to the communities.

The Cree Regional Authority has already moved to Nemaska. CreeCo. and the Board of Compensation will be moved to Ouje-Bougoumou by 1995. As for Air Creebec, while the airplane hanger and maintenance operations must remain in Val d'Or (due to connecting flights), administration and even ticketing, and management could potentially be moved.

REPORT FOUND PROBLEMS IN HOW AIR CREEBEC USED TO BE MANAGED



AIR CREEBEC WAS alerted to many of its serious financial and managerial problems about a year and a half ago, when a consulting firm did a detailed analysis of the Cree airline.

The consultants' report was prepared for CreeCo. President Abel Kitchen by the firm Raymond, Chabot, Martin, Pare. A copy was obtained by *The Nation*.

The report said Air Creebec employees had a strong will to turn things around. "We believe a good majority of the management and employees of Air Creebec are dedicated to the success of the company and are disappointed when they are not given the opportunity to participate."

But the report pinpointed many management problems at Air Creebec and listed some of the reasons why the airline was over \$17 million in debt. Here are some of the problems that had to be overcome to make this year's profit:

- There seemed to be no planning for the mid- or long-term viability of the company. Snap decisions were made affecting the profitability of the company without any consideration of revenue or cost. "There is no clear understanding of the real mission of the company on a long-term basis," said the report.

- The consultants said many employ-

ees felt the Crees would continue to bail out Air Creebec indefinitely, despite its losses. "From our observations, there is a limited number of management who are aware of the profitability of the company," says the report.

- Air Creebec managers appeared to tolerate the presence of employees who were not motivated. Performance evaluations of employees were not done on regularly.

- The authors expressed concern about the lack of ethics in the way financial information about Air Creebec was disclosed to the company's own Board of Directors. The report said the airline's financial department had issued misleading information or neglected to disclose important financial information to the Board.

- There were too many managers for a company of Air Creebec's size.

- The report said Air Creebec's organization structure was too vague. There was no clear understanding of the mission of the company on a long-term basis. Managers needed precise job descriptions and who they should report to.

- Department managers were not asked for their input on decisions that affected their own department's costs.

- Employee management meetings were not occurring on a regular quarterly basis.

- Employees interviewed did not understand or have knowledge of the roles of Air Creebec's president and vice-president.

- Departmental leadership continued to cause problems. Decision-making lacked a systematic disciplined approach. Decisions which should have been made by departmental managers were allowed to be deferred to a higher level.

- The report suggested that Air Creebec's president should take more of an active and visible role in the company.

- Also, the executive vice-president should inspire managers to do well, said the report.

—Catherine Bainbridge

Looking at the options

ONE CHIEF'S VISION

At a community meeting in Wemindji on Aug. 5, Chief Walter Hughboy made a proposal that surprised some, and worried others. He unveiled a plan to build five or six new mini-hydrodams in the Maguatua River basin, and sell the excess power to Hydro-Quebec.

He went on to criticize the Grand Council of the Crees for neglecting to create jobs in the Cree communities. Wemindji, he suggested, has to create wealth and jobs for itself because the Grand Council isn't doing enough. Unemployment in the communities is soaring, and a new generation of young Crees needs jobs, he said.

In an interview with *The Nation*, Chief Hughboy explained some of his views on the Grand Council and on the future of the Crees. He didn't exactly say that Wemindji might pull out of the Grand Council. But he made it clear things have to change, or Wemindji will be forced to look at its options.

by Alex Roslin

"The options available are the mandate given the Grand Council on the fire-fighting equipment, all the other stuff, is terminated. We, as the Band Council, will take over all of this."

The Nation: At the last Band meeting in Wemindji, we understand you hinted that Wemindji might consider pulling out of the Grand Council of the Crees. We were wondering if that's something you meant seriously, or was it something you were saying out of frustration?

Chief Walter Hughboy: We're negotiating on policing. We're negotiating on trying to get the government to respond on the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

The problem is Quebec made an offer at the General Assembly back in Nov. 1993—an offer of partnership for development of the North that was first offered by [then-Premier Robert] Bourassa back in Aug. 1988. There was never an official response by the Crees to that offer.

The offer was on policing or on development?

Everything. It was self-government, development of hydro, resources, everything on that territory. The Crees have never taken a position on that.

We looked at that, and we said there's no jobs in the communities. There's nothing at all in the communities. And there's a lot of stress and tension at the local level.

What we said was we belong to an association called the Grand Council/CRA. The Grand Council has taken a position to oppose Great Whale at all costs. One of the costs is sacrificing our young people who are losing job opportunities.

No matter how you slice the cake, you have to deal with Quebec, you have to deal with Canada, you have to deal with Hydro-Quebec, the SDBJ and SEBJ.

What people are looking very seriously at that option of whether to continue to oppose Great Whale, but there are a lot of things happening in that area that we could look at. Like an example is the mini-hydrodams. The mini-hydrodams will give us energy self-sufficiency. If we get the rates we are seeking, it will give us almost financial independence.

Do you think the Grand Council is going to be against those mini-dams?

If you look at what the Grand Council has taken a position on, their position is very clear—oppose Great Whale. Great Whale is the main preoccupation with them. That's what they spend all their resources on, and all their time and effort.

I don't see the merits of building Great Whale. There's no economic merits in it. But Hydro-Quebec has never said they're going to build Great Whale; they're going to do a study on it.

Do you think Great Whale isn't so bad, or do you just think more time should be spent on other things?

I think that's where the misunderstanding is. We say Great Whale is bad. But when you compare it to the La Grande complex, it's not as bad. That's the problem I'm having.

When you look at just alone the Yellow Reservoir, Boyd and Sakami, there are more people trapping there than people who are going to be affected by GB-1, GB-2, GB-3.

And the other thing about Great Whale is that it's all rocks. It's all gorges there. It's ideal for building those kinds of dams, as opposed to here, where you flatten large tracts of land. LL-1 alone flattens more land than GB-1, GB-2 and GB-3 put together.

When we say that, people think we are



for Great Whale. No, we're not for Great Whale. People misunderstand that. What we're saying is Great Whale is there in the James Bay Agreement. What we're saying is the concentration of the political might, concentration of all the funds and resources of the Crees should not just centre on Great Whale. There's other things.

Great Whale is not a go. Back in March 1989, it was not a go. Four years later it's still not a go. We spent five years, all that energy and effort, and Great Whale is still not at the table yet.

So do you think the Grand Council is stalling Wemindji's economic development?

It's not just Wemindji, but all the other bands. They've got a similar problem in Chisasibi. They're trying to get rid of their Chief. There's no jobs in Chisasibi. The future is very bleak. People say when the jobs go at LI-1, what happens next? That's where the problem is. People want jobs.

The younger generation is coming up. There's more and more pressure coming from the young people. The hunting, fishing and trapping way of life, sorry to say, we have saturated the resources for hunting and fishing, and for the fur income. I don't think we can put any more trappers in our

traplines any more. So we've got to find another place of work for the young people.

And the cost of living is getting higher and higher. People just don't have the resources to feed their families. It's like that not only here, but in all the other communities.

So the answer you think is that Wemindji should maybe go it alone, maybe using these dams to gain more independence?

No, we never said that. We said that in order for us to not take the position of the Grand Council/CRA, the band has to seriously look at other ways to deal with the issues that are coming up.

Because once you oppose Great Whale, then all the other issues we deal with are jeopardized. All the issues are linked to a certain extent to Great Whale, and it took us a long time to convince Hydro, SEBJ and especially the Quebec government that these things are not linked. But they do link them. They look at the eventual payback; and that the Crees will eventually come to the table to discuss Great Whale.

The government is not moving on

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

the Nation

Wemindji dissidents write

The following anonymous letter was sent to The Nation from Wemindji:

Chief Walter Hughboy calls for a General Meeting with his people in Wemindji on August 5, 1994 after numerous demands made by the people to address issues pertaining to irregularities at the Council level.

But instead of Chief Hughboy addressing these issues, he proposes to his people a mandate to proceed to explore and develop the hydroelectric potential of the Maguata River basin, which will be connected to Hydro-Quebec's main grid for exportation to the U.S.

According to Chief Hughboy, Wemindji will negotiate a long-term cooperative agreement relation with Hydro-Quebec and maintenance of the power plant, plus other related matters. But Walter never mentioned at the meeting to his people that this Sakami-Boyd hydroelectric project is not mentioned or contemplated in the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, which only allows the signatories to amend the Agreement.

After a prolonged period of Chief Hughboy's political rantings with a lot of mumbo-jumbo, he transpires into the Robert Bourassa syndrome. He even goes as far as pursuing the Jacques Parizeau dream for a separation, indicating that the Cree Nation of Wemindji should break away from the Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec due to the fact that Grand Chief Coon Come is somewhat stalling the socio-economic growth of the Crees by opposing the Great Whale Project.

According to the people, it's totally ridiculous to even think about a separation from the Cree Nation when our way of life is on the line because of Robert Bourassa's syndrome and when we were advised by our Elders to take a stand together as a "nation." As the saying goes, "together we stand, divided we fall."

Very concerned Cree members

Hughboy...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

those other issues because of the opposition to Great Whale?

It jeopardizes a lot of things. It jeopardized our negotiations on the police. People say those issues are not linked. But they are linked in the government's eyes.

So what do you think the future is? Where should Wemindji go from now to deal with that problem?

You have to look at the future for the young people. The hunting and fishing way of life economically is very limited. You have

to realize that. So you have to find another source to sustain the community economically, socially and culturally. That's all we're saying.

But in terms of your relationship with the Grand Council or CRA, what do you think the future holds for that? Is it possible that Wemindji might pull out?

We never said we're going to pull out. The discussion came about regarding the fire station and things like that. We desperately need those facilities. The problem we have is that it's up to the government of Quebec to put those things up under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agree-

ment.

The Grand Council since I can remember has been trying to get that thing going. And Quebec and Canada have always found a loophole to get around that responsibility. The spirit of the Agreement is that Quebec and Canada should contribute to the Crees to put up all the fire halls in each community.

But that kind of exercise is a task of the Grand Council/CRA, which is designated to discuss that on behalf of all the bands. But they don't want to discuss that because Great Whale is the main preoccupation for everybody.

And the government of Quebec has used the dispute with the Crees to circumvent all the provisions in the James Bay Agreement.

Do you think what you should do now is pressure the Grand Council to change its priorities?

Well, the Grand Council will never change its priorities.

So what's the answer?

The answer is to wait.

Just to wait?

Well, we're not going to wait forever.

When you stop waiting, what will you do?

I'm not going to tell a reporter what I'm going to do. I'm going to do what I have to do based on the directives I'm going to get from my people.

Can you describe what options are available?

The options available are that the mandate given the Grand Council on the fire-fighting equipment, all the other stuff, is terminated. We, as the Band Council, will take over all of this.

Not just the fire-fighting equipment?

The fire-fighting equipment, the policing negotiations, things like that. But there's always downsides. There's the argument that you'll weaken the negotiations. You appear to be stronger as a group.

But that's debatable. That's the thing you have to assess. You have to think the thing out and do it rationally and logically.

When the Grand Council looks at it from our point of view, I want everybody to say, given the situation, I would have done the same thing; any reasonable man, they would have done the same thing.

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Vern Cheechoo

Still Flying High

by Will Nicholls

I first heard Vern Cheechoo on the *Goose Wings* album. He impressed me then and he impresses me still.

I finally got a chance to catch up with this travelling man in Wemindji, where he performed some of his latest music at the 35th anniversary of the community's move from Old Factory Island. The concert started about one and a half hours late. Not bad for Cree time and well worth the wait. Vern granted *The Nation* an interview after the concert.

This Cree comes from Moose Factory but is currently in Toronto getting ready to record a new album this fall. Vern's last album was called *Lonesome and Hurting*. It came out in 1992 and had a countryish sound.

The sounds of Vern Cheechoo have changed to a harder native beat. If his music sent chills up and down your spine before, watch out now! Vern and his band shines in the new sounds.

The Nation: The last time you were in Wemindji it was with Wapistan (Lawrence Martin). What do you think of his recent success?

Vern: I'm glad for him because we always talked about it. We talked about doing what we're doing now. I guess back then we expected it to be a little more... [laughter]. Well, we were younger and we wanted to be stars and stuff like that. It's not like that. It's a lot of work.

When you sign a deal with somebody, people think right away that you've made it. Now you're supposed to be rich and



PHOTO BY NEIL DIAMOND

things like that. It's not like that. When you sign with a label that's when the work just begins. A lot of promotion has go into it with a lot of roadwork to create a following.

So that's what we are trying to do right now. It's tough getting into opening spots for other artists. You need luck and hard work to create opportunities for yourself. With the new album we're going to have an even bigger push.

Some of the songs you do deal with that.

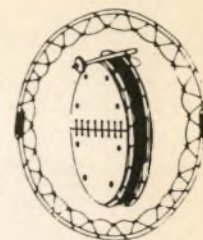
Yes, some of the songs deal with the chances and I'd like to put those on the album.

What would you call your music style? Tonight I've heard a little country, a little rock, blues and sometimes pop.

I just want to keep people guessing, I guess... [laughter]. I don't know. I don't know where you would put me. I guess it's a meas-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

CREE REGIONAL AUTHORITY
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PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Vern Cheechoo...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

ure of Santana, CCR [Credence Clearwater Revival], Hank Williams... [laughter]. All my influences from the past—Jimmy Rogers, Billy Joe Shaver.

The kind of writing I like to do is to have the song say something, mean something. You know they are about me but they're something people can relate to. Everyone has these things in their head.

When can we expect your next album out?

Probably by next January or February. It's a long process creating an album. I know at least *this* process is taking a while... [laughter]. I haven't been in a studio in a while.

While performing you mentioned problems with your wife. Was this because you were on the road so much?

I think it's something that happened over the years. We didn't know what we were

getting into when we got married. It's been in the last year or so that things have finally settled down and everything has come together for us. We just had to say let's stop this because I'm sort of not feeling comfortable with this. My wife was saying the same thing. We decided we would let each other go and grow on our own for a little while. We decided to take that time, to give each other that time to be on our own for a while.

What it's done for us is to bring us back together. It's great.

I've noticed there are a lot of personal messages in your songs. Is this to help other people?

Yes. There's a lot of people out there, especially the young people. They are committing suicide—it's become an epidemic out there. The kind of work that's going on in the communities is to try and resolve that situation. It's looking at young people and the problems they are facing. There's sol-

vent abuse, alcohol abuse, sexual abuse and young people don't know how to deal with it. The older people have problems of their own and they can't see what young people are going through.

A lot of people today are starting to change that. They are beginning to heal themselves—to see what's going on with the young people.

And that's what the songs are about. Right now for the young people, to send a positive message to the young people. To help them get off that merry-go-round and get a breath. To look around and see it's beautiful.

A lot of people are starting to stop the cycle of abuse. This is very hopeful.

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Yes, I'm on my way to sleep now. It's been a long day [lots of laughter all around]...

People wanting to get Vern's music live should contact Serge Sloimovits of Dark Light Music at 416-977-9859.



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The start is the big Pow Wow drum and is slightly reminiscent of Willie Dunn for just a few seconds. Then a female voice with a country attitude sings, "I am an Eagle," and we're off and running.

"Ashtum," the second song, is a relaxing instrumental ride. "Midnight Strongheart" picks up the pace nicely. Lawrence (Wapistan) Martin's great writing is evident in the guitar riffs.

In the middle, a mix of traditional flute and chanting is intermixed beautifully with modern-day music in a way that must be heard to truly appreciate. If only for this song, buy the album, but I know it won't be just for this song. There are so many good ones.

"Thunder Warrior" looks at the victory over Custer. It gives meaning to the phrase, "It's a good day to die."

"Medewin Kwe" is a song that's almost a prayer to a daughter sung in the Oddawa tongue. "Indian Giver" is sung by one of my favourite native artists—Murray Porter. This boy just gets better even when I play the same songs over and over. For a song that's in unity and harmony with your feelings, just press play.

If you've got that gospel bent, listen to it in Cree as Wapistan sings, "Oo-Wa Gitchi Manitou." The fiddle gives it that old-time feeling that's sure to bring back a few memories and rekindle that relationship with the Great Spirit.

The last song on the album talks about the seven generations. Seven generations of surviving European contact is what we as native people represent. The song talks about our relationship with "the Spirit of Light," and says, "Truth is all that we need."

In truth, you can demand this album in your local store if it isn't already there!

BY WILL NICHOLLS

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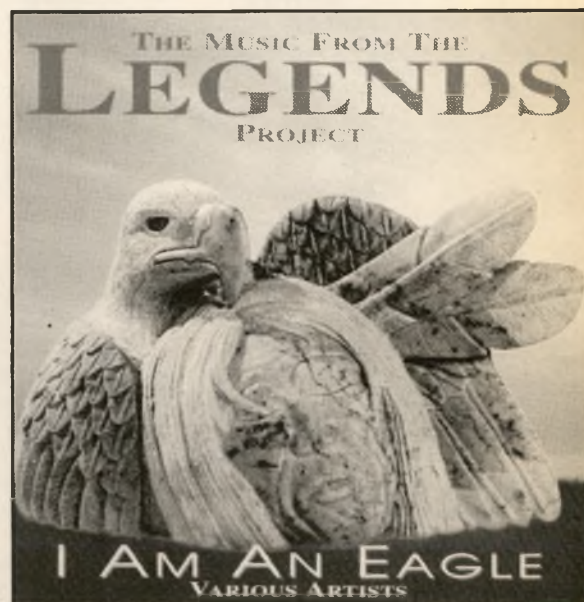
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LOSING SOMEONE WE LOVE

BY LOIS MARY BLACKNED

In memory of Thomas Blackned, who died on July 12, 1994, age 87 years old.

To all who have known him as a father, grandfather, dear friend and a well-known man in our community. Today as I stand before you it brings to my heart the memories of Thomas, our grandfather and your father. A lot of things come to mind like the stories he used to share with us. Maybe we will not all remember all the stories but they will always be in our hearts.

Each and every one of us will remember him differently. As hard as it may be to lose someone so special and so close to us, we have to go on our own paths but never forget his ways, the way he wanted to be.

The younger ones will only know him in memories, but those who are older who

have known him should pass the teachings of our grandfather on to the younger generation. We shall never part from the teachings of such a wise and wonderful man—our grandfather.

To me it seems weird every time I walk into our home because I expect him to be laying on the couch and always asking me how my day was. When we used to get into trouble grandpa would get mad but he would tell us a story and in that story there would always be a lesson in it. He was proud of us in everything we did even if we took the wrong paths.

His thoughts and memories will always be cherished in our hearts forever. He was a hero to all of us.

Lois Mary Blackned, who lives in Waskaganish, is the late Thomas Blackned's granddaughter.



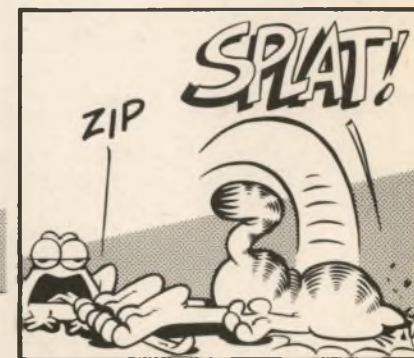
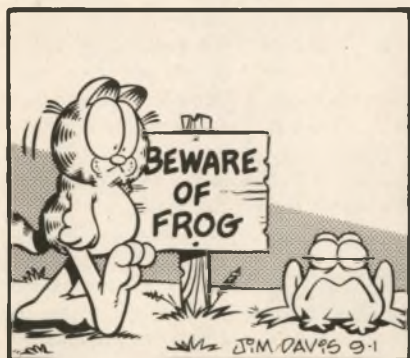
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Towards a Better Economic Development

Since 1983, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), through its Northern Quebec Area and Native Affairs, has been working with the Cree Regional Authority on various initiatives for fisheries development on the James Bay territory. These projects were supported by a variety of different programs also available on the Inuit territory.

Until 1988, the Special Fisheries Development Program was more specifically directed towards the study of Atlantic salmon and exploratory coastal fisheries in the North-East section of James Bay. The Department also helped in the acquisition of a vessel for the community of Wemindji.

From 1987 to 1991, studies and exploratory fisheries, including a sturgeon fishery, were carried out under the Economic Regional Development Agreement signed with the Province of Quebec. It is also during this period that the Waswanipi plant began its commercial operations. The plant bought a refrigerated truck, developed a management plan and proceeded with market studies.

Since 1989, numerous other initiatives were carried out under the Fisheries and Aquaculture Testing and Experimentation Program and the Quebec Federal Fisheries Development Program. These initiatives dealt with several activities, such as exploitation of resources, particularly research into sources of supply, processing, development of new recipes, marketing of various fish species, and quality control. Consultations were conducted at a workshop held in Val d'Or, and follow-up was done with coastal communities. More selective fishing gear such as trapnets and fyke nets were tested. An operation manual as well as the training given to its employees contributed to improve the quality of Waswanipi plant products. Finally, a professional assistance was provided to help with the preparation of projects, such as the production of whitefish caviar or the winter Arctic cod fishery in Chisasibi.

For more information on DFO and its programs, do not hesitate to contact our Inukjuak District Office by dialing 1 800 254-8117 or (819) 254-8518. You can also reach our Quebec office by dialing (418) 649-6196.

Vers un meilleur développement économique

Depuis 1983, le ministère des Pêches et des Océans (MPO), par l'intermédiaire de son secteur Nord québécois et Affaires autochtones, collabore avec l'Administration régionale crie à différents projets de développement des pêches sur le territoire de la baie James. Ces projets bénéficient de l'appui d'une grande variété de programmes, également offerts en territoire inuit.

Jusqu'à 1988, le Programme spécial de développement des pêches s'était plus particulièrement concentré sur l'étude du saumon atlantique et des pêches côtières exploratoires au nord-est de la baie James. Le Ministère avait également collaboré à l'acquisition d'un navire pour la communauté de Wemindji.

De 1987 à 1991, c'est dans le cadre de l'Entente sur le développement économique signée avec la province de Québec que les études et la pêche exploratoire, y compris celle de l'esturgeon, ont été finalisées. C'est aussi à cette époque que les opérations commerciales de l'usine de Waswanipi ont débuté. Cette dernière a acheté un camion réfrigérant, elle a élaboré un plan de gestion et procédé à des études de marché.

Depuis 1989, beaucoup d'autres projets se sont concrétisés grâce au Programme d'essai et d'expérimentation halieutique et aquicole ainsi qu'au Programme fédéral de développement des pêches du Québec. Des projets d'exploitation des ressources, notamment en matière de recherche de sources d'approvisionnement, ont été réalisés de même que des projets de transformation, d'élaboration de nouvelles recettes, de mise en marché de produits variés et de contrôle de qualité. Par exemple, on a tenu un atelier de travail à Val d'Or afin de consulter les communautés et on a assuré un suivi auprès des communautés côtières. Des engins de pêche sélectifs, soit la trappe et le verveux, ont été testés. Un manuel de fonctionnement et la formation donnée aux employés de l'usine de Waswanipi ont amélioré la qualité des produits. Enfin, un conseiller professionnel a été embauché afin d'aider à la préparation de projets comme ceux, à Chisasibi, concernant la production de caviar de corrégone ou l'organisation de la pêche d'hiver à la morue.

Pour de plus amples informations sur le MPO et ses programmes, n'hésitez pas à contacter notre bureau régional d'Inukjuak en composant le 1 800 254-8117 ou le (819) 254-8518. Vous pouvez également nous rejoindre en appelant notre bureau de Québec au (418) 649-6196.



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